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**UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc.  
1601 Kent Street, Suite 1003  
Arlington, VA 22209**

**March 24, 2003**

Honorable Marlene Dortch  
*secretary*  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20054

Dear Ms. Dortch:

**RE: MB Docket No. 02-277 (Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules)**

The **national organization** UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc., is asking the FCC to hold more public hearings at the local level on the Broadcast Ownership Rules and the related issues. Attached is a letter we wish to submit to the Commission and its chairman, Michael K. Powell, and the press release issued by UNITY on this matter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Ernest R Sotomayor

President, UNITY Journalists of color, Inc  
1601 N. Kent Street, suite 1003  
Arlington, VA 22209  
703-469-200

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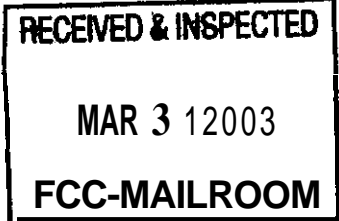
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**March 20, 2003**

The Honorable Michael K Powell  
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review - Review of the Commission's Broadcast ownership Rules and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 - MB Docket No. 02-277

Chairman Powell:

On behalf of UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc., a coalition representing the four largest journalism organizations of color in the United States, we hereby request that the Federal Communications Commission delay its plans to promulgate new rules this spring on regulation and ownership restrictions of broadcast media in the United States.

UNITY, representing more than 7,000 journalists of color, is concerned that the process of revising these rules, while having allowed for written public comment, has not provided ample opportunity for people at the local level, particularly in communities of color, to offer input.

We hereby request that, in the interest of ensuring a broader and more diverse dialogue on this complex matter, you schedule and publicize a series of hearings nationwide to allow the public to comment on and more fully understand the ramifications of revising rules that have the potential to substantially reshape the nation's new media industries.

We believe the public's interest is paramount since it has the most at stake in any future changes within the news media and it is our position that convening a single public hearing for public participation does not adequately serve the public good.

Chairman Powell, you have **expressed** that **the** rule changes will be **among** the most sweeping ever when it comes to the **news** media, **and** it **is** clear that they have potential to affect thousands of jobs, including many held by journalists of color, and to affect **the** presentation of news and information disseminated **to** millions of *American* viewers, listeners and **readers**.

The **UNITY** alliance organizations **are** concerned that interested **groups**, especially those representing minority communities and their constituencies **at** the local level, have not had sufficient time **or** ability to influence **the** process. Further, **we** believe more time is needed to **study** the issue **to ensure** that consolidations will not reverse **gains made** toward **making** the news media workforce more diverse, **and that** they do not **skew** coverage, particularly in communities of color.

Our concerns follow an erosion of representation of people of color in major **parts** of **the** broadcast media industry. According to the 2002 **annual survey** by the Radio and Television News Directors **Association**, the representation of people of color in **local broadcast newsrooms** declined from 24.6 in 2001 to 20.6 in 2002. We remain concerned about the diversity **at** the national level, **as** well, but similar **data** is not available for the networks, **since they** do not participate in the RTNDA **annual census**. It is widely acknowledged, however, that the **networks** have made little progress on this front, **and** no measures **under** FCC rules now address **this** lack of diversity.

At its recent meeting in Fort Worth, **UNITY's** board of directors overwhelmingly approved a motion directing an ad-hoc committee to analyze the **pending** rule changes and recommend a **course** of action to **the** full board.

We also join in **the request** made earlier **this** year by **UNITY** alliance **partners** NAHJ (The National Association of Hispanic Journalists) **and** NABJ (The National Association of Black Journalists), calling for a delay in the process.

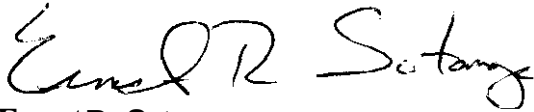
**UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc.** represents more than 7,000 members of **the** National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ), the Asian American Journalists Association (**AAJA**) **and** the Native American Journalists Association (NAJA). Member **organizations** jointly gather every five years for a national convention, **with** the **next** to be held August 4-8, 2004 in Washington D.C.

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UNITY's mission is to ~~work~~ to ensure **fair and accurate** news coverage of communities of color, and ultimately, the changes the Commission is *preparing* to make should ~~work~~ toward that **goal** as well. As such, we ~~offer~~ our expertise in diversity of the news media as a resource for the FCC on this ~~matter~~.

Thank you for consideration of this request

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ernest R. Sotomayor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ernest" and last name "Sotomayor" clearly distinguishable.

Ernest R. Sotomayor  
President, Board of Directors  
UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc.

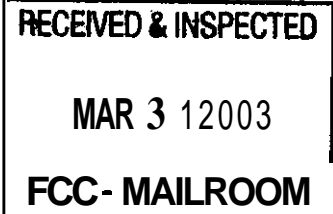
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cc: Commissioners Kathleen Q. Abernathy; Michael J. Copps; Kevin J. Martin; Jonathan S. Adelstein



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**March 24, 2003**

**PRESS RELEASE – UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc seeks more hearings before FCC revises media ownership rules**

Washington, D.C. – The coalition ~~that~~ **represents** the **four largest U.S. journalism organizations of color** is asking ~~the~~ Federal Communications Commission to delay ruling **on the six** controversial **proposals** to **loosen regulation and** ownership restrictions **of** broadcast media in **the United States.**

**In a** letter last **week** to the FCC and its Chairman Michael K. Powell, **UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc.** expressed **concern** regarding **the** limited **opportunity** that **the** commission has provided for public input **at the** local level **on this** complex critical issue. **UNITY** is asking Powell to schedule **and** publicize a **series** of public hearings nationwide **to** allow the public, **at a** local level, **to** comment on and more fully **understand** the ramifications of the rule changes **under** consideration

“Along ~~with~~ other organizations, we believe **the** FCC should provide ample opportunity **for** the public, which has **much to gain or** lose through **the** changes in the media ownership rules, to be a part of this complex ~~discussion~~ **through** additional **hearings,**” said **UNITY** President ~~Ernest R~~ Sotomayor, who **is** Long Island Editor at Newsday.com in **New York.** “**By** convening a single public hearing **on** changes **that** have potential to substantially **reshape** the news media industry, the FCC is not **serving the** public’s interest.”

only **one** public **hearing** has **been held this year** – in Richmond, **VA** , on **Feb. 27** – to allow the public to appear before the commission.

The FCC Is expected later this **year** to **relax** several longstanding policies limiting ownership of television and **radio stations**, a move thai could **unleash** a wave **of** media consolidation. **The** FCC is considering changing or possibly scrapping six critical **rules** covering media ownership, some dating **back more than a** half-century.

The FCC rule changes have **potential** to affect **thousands of jobs**, including many held by journalists **of color**, **as well as** how **news and information is reported to** millions **of** American viewers, listeners **and** readers **as the news media outlets are** consolidated into fewer **and** more **concentrated** entities in local markets.

The **UNITY** alliance organizations are **concerned** that interested **groups**, especially those representing minority communities **and** constituencies, have **not** had sufficient time or ability to influence the **process and** to study the issue **to ensure that** consolidations will not **reverse** gains **made in making the news media workforce more** diverse, and that they do not **skew** coverage, particularly in communities **of color**.

At Its most recent meeting in Fort Worth, **UNITY's** board **of directors** overwhelmingly **approved** a motion directing an **ad-hoc** committee to analyze the pending rule changes and **recommend a course of action to the** full board.

"We believe **that** the interests **of the** public should **be** paramount **as the** FCC makes its **decisions**, and that would dictate **the** need to allow **more** comment," Sotomayor **said**

Earlier, **UNITY alliance partners** NAHJ (**The National Association of Hispanic Journalists**) **and** NABJ (**The National Association of Black Journalists**) have separately **called** for a delay in **the process**.

**In** its resolution, the NAHJ board last month **called** on the FCC **to postpone its plans** to issue **rules this spring** until it **convenes** more hearings in different parts **of the country**, and **for media companies** overall **to provide greater** news coverage on the issue.

A recent **report by** Fairness **and** Accuracy in Reporting **revealed that since** the FCC announced the review **of the nation's broadcast ownership rules last September**, ABC, CBS and NBC have done little **to cover the issue**. FAIR **found only one network story on the issue**: a short summary on ABC's **World News This Morning that** aired on **Sept. 9 at 4:30 am.**

**UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc. represents more than 7,000 members of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ) the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA) and the Native American Journalists Association (NAJA).** Member organizations jointly gather every five years for a national convention, with the **next to be held August 4-8, 2004** in Washington D.C.

For more information or to join the **appeal**, contact:

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